

**CHURCH OF SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS
ROCK SPRINGS, WYOMING
HISTORICAL DATA FOR THE YEARS 1941 to 1950**

[1] In February 1941 the rubber tile flooring was installed in the sanctuary; a very good job for the amount of \$486.50.

Confirmation was administered by His Excellency, Most Rev. P.A. McGovern on May 11, 1941, to 88 parishioners, the smallest group up to this time.

May 18, 1941, the Rev. Nicholas Elko, of McAdoo, Pa., a priest of Greek Catholic rite visited some 20 Greek-Catholic families living in Rock Springs and its vicinity.

An other parishioner, the second in the existence of the parish—the first one was Rev. Aloisius Potochnik, O.S.B.—was ordained priest on December 20, 1944, in Canon City, Colorado: he was Rev. Baldwin Haydock, O.S.B., and offered his First Solemn Mass in the parish church on December 24, 1944.

His Excellency, Most Rev. P. A. McGovern, D.D., confirmed on May 28, 1944, a group of 151.

During the World War of 1941 to 1945 some 250 were in some kind of service. 7 of them lost their lives.

Married Women's Sodality was organized in the parish in 1946, was affiliated with the Prima Primaria and had first Solemn reception on May 12, 1946; it was named St. Monica's Sodality. This is a group of about 80 very active married women of the parish.

Week after November 16, 1947, a mission was conducted in the parish by the Rev. Kenneth D. Hofmann of Chicago, Ill., a devout priest and a forceful speaker. The attendance was good and the results very fruitful.

In March 1948, a mission was preached by Rev. Aloisius Medic, O.F.M., of Lemont, Ill., a Slovenian priest, who spoke for 3 days in Slovenian, the rest in English. He also conducted the 40-hours' devotion and gave one day retreat to people in Pinedale.

Confirmation was administered by His Excellency, Most Rev. P.A. McGovern, D.D., on May 16, 1948, to a class of 176.

[2] The Rev. Anton Schiffrer, the founder and the first pastor of the parish (1910 to 1926), died in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on June 21, 1948, in the age of 63, and was buried there.

The greatest event in 1949 was the campaign for the school-building fund conducted during November and December. The goal was set at \$45,000.00, but it reached in cash and in pledges the amount of \$65,000.00. Up to the end of 1950 the amount of \$22,100.00 was paid.

End of March 1949, a mission conducted by a Slovak priest, Rev. Lawrence Pollak, O.F.M., Valparaiso, Indiana was held in Slovak and English. He also visited the people in Pinedale and preached at 40-hours' devotion.

Negotiations with the Union Pacific Coal Company for the purchase of a portion of the so-called Barracks' property for the future school site began late in 1949, and were completed in May, 1950. The parish bought the portion of 130 x 280 feet of the Barracks ground for the amount of \$32,285.55.

At that time also a lease agreement for the boardinghouse on the Barracks' property was signed. The house is to be remodeled as to be suitable for Sisters' home.

Kellogg and Kellogg Architects of Rock Springs and Cheyenne, made the plans for the proposed parochial school with the estimated cost of building in the amount of \$150,000.00. On August 18, 1950, the bids

were opened and rejected, being too high: the lowest by Olson Construction Co. of Salt Lake City, Utah was in the amount of \$166,905.00.

After many meetings and deliberations the parishioners -with the approval of the Bishop, His Excellency, Most Rev. P.A. McGovern, D.D., decided to remodel the preset Barracks building into school facilities. The Kellogg Lumber Company of Rock Springs was awarded a cost plus contract for the remodeling according to the architects' plans for an estimated amount of \$60,000.00. The remodeling went under way in November 1950.

March 15 to 23, 1950 a mission was conducted in Croatian and English by the Rev. John S. Juricek of Omaha, Nebraska.

Number of families at the end of 1950 was approximately 560 and is steadily growing through the influx of Spanish speaking population.
January 25th 1951

(Rev.) Albin Gnidovec.

**CHURCH OF SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS
ROCK SPRINGS. WYOMING**

June 11, 1960

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM 1950 to 1960

[1] During 1950 plans were being made—both financially and architecturally— for a long needed parochial grade school. Payments pledged for the Building Fund Campaign were coming in satisfactorily at this time. A school building committee was then formed to take charge of this project. Meanwhile the architects, Kellogg and Kellogg of Rock Springs, were busy working on the actual plans for the school. The plans, according to the architects, were then let out for bidding. When these bids were opened and examined by the Building Committee, they were rejected.

With careful investigation by experts of the existing Barracks' buildings, the Committee decided to remodel the Barracks and convert them into a school building. After the architects had submitted the plans of remodeling, the actual remodeling and construction was given to Kellogg Lumber Company.

In 1951, the remodeling and construction of the Barracks' building began. At this time the house adjacent to the Barracks was also being remodeled into a convent. It was quite a problem to secure the teaching sisters for the school; after quite a correspondence with different religious orders, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Xavier, Kansas, were secured. What a relief!

The remodeled Barracks looked like a brand new building when completed. His Excellency, the Most Rev. Hubert M. Newell dedicated the new school on August 26, 1951. The school, with eight class rooms-- all on the ground floor -- opened for "business" September 4, 1951 with an enrollment of 190 children in the First to the Sixth grades inclusive. (There were also 85 children in this school from Our Lady of Sorrows

parish at this time!) A bus, with a capacity of 48 pupils, transported the [2] children from and to the more distant places. The following year (1952-53) the seventh grade was added and the next year (1953-54) the eighth grade opened. The total enrollment in the School for 1952-53 was 257 pupils.

1952 saw the rest of the Barracks property purchased from the Union Pacific Coal Company. From this transaction the whole block, known as the Barracks, became the property of the parish.

The last payment to the Union Pacific Coal Company was transacted January 7, 1953 in the amount of \$44,000.00. The total amount for the Barracks' property paid to the Union Pacific Coal Co. was \$111,035.55. The convent building was donated to the parish at that time!

The greatest event of 1954 was the appointment of an assistant to the parish. After quite a few requests for an assistant, our prayers were answered when Rev. Charles F. Taylor came into the parish in September.

November 21, 1954 the first issue of the Parish Bulletin appeared and is still going strong in 1960.

Our Lady of Peace Mission in Pinedale became a parish of its own after having been a mission of Saints Cyril and Methodius since 1935. It certainly was a relief when the 100 miles travel every Sunday was no longer necessary.

The outstanding event -- materially speaking -- in 1955 was the Diocesan-wide Bishop's Fund Campaign with the pledged amount of \$72,000.00. Eighty per cent of the pledges were paid during the prescribed period.

The parish house was becoming inadequate for proper service to the parishioners and for living quarters for both the priests and the

housekeeper. During the [3] first seven months of 1956, in accordance with the plans drawn up by Kellogg and Kellogg architects, a new part was added to the front of the house and the old portion was remodeled inside.

For a long time the outside entrance to the church steps was very dangerous and difficult to ascend, especially for elderly people. So after many years of trying, (the financial part was critical!), the entrance was remodeled and made safe and easy to ascend. This was accomplished during the last part of 1956.

In July 1956, Rev. Charles F. Taylor left the parish for three years post-graduate studies (Canon Law) in Rome. He was replaced in August by Rev. Daniel Colibraro, a native of Casper, Wyoming.

During this time, Eden Valley -- 40 miles North of Rock Springs -- was becoming more populated with Catholic families. These people, of course, could not attend Mass on Sundays with out extreme difficulty. A survey was taken by the pastor and it was concluded that a Sunday Mass would be a great help to these people. With the permission of the Bishop, regular Mass was offered at the ranch home of Mr. Thomas Delmastro in Eden. This practice began in September of 1956 and was continued every Sunday for a period of almost two years.

The following year - 1957 - Mr. John T. Radosevich of Eden donated a sufficient plot of ground for a church (300 X 300 feet). Kellogg and Kellogg architects drew up plans for such a church with a capacity of one hundred people. In July of 1957 the actual work on the building began by volunteer labor, mostly by men from Rock Springs. Three thousand yards of dirt was necessary to build up the ground for [4] the church. The Extension Society of America donated \$5,000.00 towards the building. The rest of the money was coming in gradually by individuals. Practically all the work was donated and the church was dedicated July 13, 1958 by His Excellency. Most Rev. Hubert M. Newell

of Cheyenne. It thus became the first church in the diocese with St. Christopher as a patron saint.

In July of 1958, Father Colibraro was transferred to Cheyenne to take over the Wyoming Catholic Register. In his place was appointed to Saints Cyril and Methodius Rev. William Kendrick, who was at that time an assistant in Rawlins, Wyoming. He arrived in September 1958. In July 1959, less than a year later, he left for his native Boston, Mass. The Rev. Gerald Sullivan - newly ordained priest - was appointed to take his place in September of 1959.

St. Christopher's Shrine, (the statue of which was executed by DaPrato in Italy of Istrian stone), was donated by the Berta Family in memory of John Berta. This shrine, situated in front of the church at Eden, was dedicated by the Bishop in the presence of a large crowd on July 12, 1959.

Also during 1959 the parking lot on the South side of the church was black-topped and the basement of the convent was remodeled.

Within the last ten year's period the following parish missions were conducted: March 15 to 22, 1950—by a diocesan priest; February 25 to March 4, 1951—by a Franciscan priest; March 16 to 30, 1952—by two Redemptorist Fathers; March 28 to April 11, 1954—by two Dominicans; [5] December 2 to 16, 1956—by two Passionist Fathers; March 16 to 30, 1958—by two Paulist Fathers.

When there was a two weeks' mission by two Fathers, one week was for women, the other for the men.

The above events then, constitute in brief the historical highlights of this parish for the period of ten years (1950 to 1960).

Rev. Albin Gnidovec –Pastor

**CHURCH OF SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS
ROCK SPRINGS. WYOMING
RECORD OF EVENTS - 1960 to 1969, INCLUSIVE**

1960 - One apartment of the Barracks building, on the Elias Street side, was remodeled so that one classroom was made and still a small apartment remained in the building.

Parish mission by Franciscan Fathers was held March 20th to April 3rd.

The Diocesan CCW convention was held in the parish May 2nd and 3rd.

1961 - For the first time it was necessary to hire two lay teachers for the school—one woman (a Negro) and one man. The colored teacher lasted only until Christmas. The man, by the name of Norman Rustigan and very well educated, was killed as a pedestrian on Interstate 80 near Evanston, Wyoming, April 23, 1962. We had bad luck with the first two lay teachers.

The third annual Wyoming State Convention of the CYO was held in the parish October 6th to 8th. A severe blizzard on the 8th kept the participants in Rock Springs an extra day. The St. Monica's Sodality took care of them very well.

1962 - The most outstanding event of the year was the solemn celebration on July 1st of the 50th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of Saints Cyril and Methodius Church (basement at that time, July 7, 1912). The Most Rev. Hubert M. Newell, Bishop of Cheyenne, was the principal speaker at the Solemn Mass at 4:00 P.M. About twenty-five priests were in attendance. A banquet, served by St. Monica's Sodality, took place in the Old Timers' Building with about 450 persons present.

A Mission by Redemptorist Fathers was held March 25 - April 8th.

May 30th, the Rev. Lawrence Welsh, son of Lawrence (Jarbo) and Mary Fornengo, offered his first Mass. He was ordained for the Rapid City, South Dakota diocese.

August 5th, the Rev. Aloysius Potochnik, O.S.B., of Canon City, Colorado, son of Mr. and Mrs. Prank Potochnik, celebrated his 25th anniversary of ordination. Ten priests were present.

The end of August, four girls, college graduates, came to the parish as Extension Lay Volunteers. Two were teachers and two were parish workers.

The parish bought the house across the street from the church (636 Bridger Avenue) to serve as living quarters for the volunteers. The cost was \$20,000.00. An amount of \$7,000.00 was spent for remodeling of the house and for improvements.

September 14th, the Rev. Gerald Sullivan was transferred to Newcastle and the Rev. Philip Colibraro was appointed assistant at Saints Cyril and Methodius parish.

1963 - A school bus for 60 pupils was bought for \$9,000.00.

1964 - Two Paulist Fathers, the Rev. Frederick T. Draeger and the Rev. William Cantwell, conducted a two-week parish mission from March 1st to 15th.

In September, the Rev. Philip Colibraro •was transferred to Our Lady of Sorrows parish, Rock Springs, and was replaced at Saints Cyril and Methodius by the Rev. John Murray.

1965 - June, the school playground and parking lot were blacktopped.

1966 - It was impossible to get Extension Lay Volunteer teachers for the school year 1966/67, but we succeeded in getting one Sister of the Order of St. Francis (Lemont, Ill.) for two years.

1967 - A parish mission by Divine Word Fathers (Fr. Louis and Fr. Graham) was conducted from February 26 to-March 12th—the first week for women and the second week for men.

The Rev. Ernest Fresques, originally from this parish, was ordained a priest May 14th in Tucson for the Tucson diocese. He had his first Mass in this church on July 2nd.

A portion of the lot on the south side of the church was blacktopped in July.

1968 - The Rev. Charles Hardy was transferred from the parish in June and his successor was Rev. Thomas Ogg.

In July a broken water pipe from outside flooded the school basement with four feet of -water and ruined equipment valued at over \$6,000.00.

Two Extension Lay Volunteer teachers were assigned to the parish for 1967/68. After 1968 there were absolutely no lay volunteer teachers available.

For the school year 1968/69 three lay teachers were hired, and also for 1969/70.

1969 - The plans were formulated for a Parish Center and, after many meetings of interested parishioners, a contract was awarded to Mitchell Construction Co. for a, steel building costing \$120,149.00. The old Barracks building on Bridger Avenue was torn down in April. The Parish Center construction began in July and was finished in March 1970.

The Passionist Father Charles Guilfoyle from March 9th to 23rd conducted a parish mission.

In May the privilege of satisfying Sunday Mass obligation by attending Mass on Saturday evening was granted by the Bishop to all who attend Mass in Saints Cyril and Methodius Church.

In August the Rev. Thomas Ogg was transferred to St. Paul's in Laramie and the Rev, Frank Redle was appointed assistant pastor at Saints Cyril and Methodius.

The parish history for Saints Cyril and Methodius Church of Rock Springs, Wyoming, for the years 1970 - 1980 follows:

Administrative Staff: Monsignor Albin Gnidovec, Pastor, began his pastorate at SCM in June 1931. Father Frank Redle, Associate Pastor began his assignment at SCM in August 1969. Sister Dolores Erman, S.C.L., Principal of the school began in September 1967.

1970: April 12--Most Reverend Bishop Hubert M. Newell, D.D., administered the sacrament of Confirmation to about 70 persons. He also dedicated the parish center building at a ceremony at noon. Mr. Henry Chadey was the master of ceremonies. A smorgasbord dinner was held in the new center from 12:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Sister Sheila Karpan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Karpan, made her final profession of vows as a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth, at the Eucharistic celebration on Saturday, August 15, at 4:00 p.m. A reception followed in the parish center.

1971: The two Catholic schools of Rock Springs were united on January 10. A school board was formed. Beginning in September of this year, grades 4, 5, and 6 were held in the SCM school building. Grades 1, 2, and 3 were held in the OLS school building.

The spring Rock Springs Deanery meeting of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women was held at the parish center on Friday, March 26. Mrs. Halvor Ravenholt was the host president.

In March, a Parish Council was formed. It consisted of the pastor, 2 trustees, 9 elected members, 1 sister, 1 member of the parochial school board, and 2 CYO representatives. The Council will cooperate with and assist the pastor in the overall administration of the parish. The first meeting was held in the rectory on April 21. Rudy Magagna was elected president of this Council.

Sister Shirley Koritnik, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Koritnik of this parish, made her perpetual vows as a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth on Saturday, August 14, at 4:30 p.m. Reception followed in the parish center.

1972: Sister Mary Suzanne's twenty-fifth anniversary as a Sister of Charity was celebrated on February 13 at the 9:30 a.m. Mass. A reception in the convent followed.

A reception was held on Sunday, August 27, on the occasion of Monsignor Gnidovec's retirement as Pastor. Monsignor was pastor of Saints Cyril and Methodius for 41 years.

A reception was held on August 29 for Father Redle, who was leaving the parish. Father Michael Butler was appointed pastor, and Father William Espenshade was appointed associate pastor. They began their work in September.

The Archbishop of Trent, Most Reverend Alissandro Maria Gottardi, was the principal celebrant at a concelebrated Mass for the people of Trentini descent on Wednesday, September 6, at 8:00 p.m.

1973: Monsignor Gnidovec conducted classes on the Slovenian culture and language in the parish center on Friday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

Father Richard Graham of the Society of Divine Word was available for conferences and confessions from March 17 to 28.

The State convention of the Knights of Columbus was held here on May 4-6.

Sister Dolores, principal for the past six years, Sister Therese, Sister Ann Cecile, Sister Jean Carmel and Sister Kristen have all been transferred to

other assignments after the completion of this school year--1972-1973. Mrs. Kenneth Perry is retiring.

The Catholic School received a grant of \$3,680 from the federal government for library materials.

Sister Angela Rose became the new principal of the school. Fencing was installed around the playground with the cost being \$975.

1974: The priests and parishioners were celebrating Mass in the parish center for several months, March 23 to June 15, while the renovations were being completed in the church building. The renovations were made by Carlson and Greene Builders in order to make the church more operative, liturgical and a more beautiful place in which to worship God. The cost of the renovation was approximately \$74,000.

Father Patrick Trujillo was appointed associate in August when Father William Espenshade was transferred to another assignment.

1975: A mini-mission was given by Father William Gianola during the week of March 16.

SCM CCW hosted the spring deanery meeting on March 17; the theme was "Our Retarded Children--A Blessing in Disguise."

In November, the Saint Elizabeth Seton Guild was formed. The purpose is to provide spiritual and social benefits for ladies of SCM and to defray the expenses of the parish. All ladies of the parish, 21 years and older, may be members.

1976: In January, Father Patrick Trujillo left for another assignment and Father Joseph Daley, S.A.C., was appointed associate.

On February 28, there was a workshop on liturgical music sponsored by the Diocesan Music Commission. This was held in the parish center from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Father Daley was reassigned and left SCM in April.

The church basement was remodeled during April. The ninety-one year old army barracks was torn down in August.

Priests and parishioners traveled by bus to the bicentennial Mass at the fairgrounds in Casper on August 15. The principal celebrant of the Mass was Cardinal Timothy Manning.

Two new school buses were purchased and arrived in July.

Sister Maria Innocenta Angelovic of the Order of Saints Cyril and Methodius celebrated her golden jubilee of Sisterhood in August.

Observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Rock Springs Catholic Schools was held on November 7. There was a noon concelebrated Mass; past and present pupils, teachers, staff, and benefactors were invited. A reception followed in the parish center.

1977: Sister Brenda Boyle, one of our teachers on sick leave, died. A concelebrated memorial Mass took place on Wednesday, March 2, at 5:15 p.m.

Sister Marjorie Feurborn became principal of the school, beginning school year 1977-1978.

In June, all parishioners were asked to give their opinion on the five most important needs of the Diocese. The priorities as seen by SCM parishioners were: (1) Need for special concern to divorced Catholics and their problems. (2) Need to revitalize the faith and participation of non-practicing Catholics. (3) Need to expand religious, recreational and

social programs for junior high and high school youth. (4) and (5)
Concern for poor and senior citizens.

The State CYO Convention was held here on September 24-26.
A parish Mission was given October 8-16 by Fathers Frank Crowley and
Carl Schulte, C.M.

A new furnace was installed in the parish center. A kitchen stove and fan
were installed in the church basement.

1978: A charismatic retreat was held here at the parish center January
13-15. Father Joseph Smerke and Father Fritz Mischke gave the retreat.

In January, Monsignor John L. Zaplotnik, who served here from
1927-1930, died in Omaha.

In March, the parish council resolved to make available to OLS their
facilities while necessary renovations were taking place to their church
following their "almost tragic fire." Masses on Saturdays and Sundays at
SCM were: 5:00, 6:00 and 7:00 p.m., and 8:00, 9:00, 11:00 a.m., and
12:00 noon and 7:00 p.m. on Sundays.

Air conditioning was installed in the parish center and kitchen at the cost
of \$25,000.

Sister Agnes Rita O'Neill celebrated her fiftieth year as a Sister of
Charity of Leavenworth. A reception was held in the parish center on
April 29 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

In April of this year, Father Butler decided that the women's
organization of SCM Church would be the Council of Catholic Women.
Henceforth, this will be the overall women's organization of the parish,
while others may continue to operate as they have in the past, and more
may spring up in the future.

Father Edward A. Dolinar was ordained to the priesthood on May 29. He was a former member of this parish.

Monsignor Gnidovec's sixtieth anniversary of ordination was celebrated with a Mass on June 2, with a reception following.

Father Michael Butler resigned from the priesthood, and Father Charles Hardy was appointed pastor in July. Pope Paul VI died on August 6. A welcome reception was held for Father Hardy on August 26-27.

The Rock Springs Catholic School started a kindergarten as of school year 1978-1979.

Emmanuel Prayer Group sponsored a charismatic retreat on September 8, 9, and 10 at the parish center. Father Fritz Mischke, O.S.C., and Father Bernard Mischke, O.S.C., presented the retreat.

On September 17, the parishes began to broadcast a Mass on television each Sunday at 11:15 a.m. This is viewed on Channel 6 for those who cannot attend in the church.

The fall deanery meeting was hosted by St. Monica's Sodality at the Outlaw Inn on September 18.

Mr. Michael Wayne has been hired as Director of Religious Education. He will be working with both Rock Springs parishes.

A Mass in memory of Pope John Paul I, who died September 28, was held here on October 3, at 9:30 a.m.

The sum of \$9,925 was spent this year on electrical work in the parish center. Also, \$1,600 has been spent this year for carpeting in the school.

Pope John Paul II was elected on October 16.

Bishop Hart made a parish visitation on November 29 - December 1. He met with the parish council and the Catholic school board.

The two Rock Springs parishes have purchased a bus to be used by youth, young adults, various parish organizations, and the school. The CYO is contributing \$900 to this bus.

Father Lawrence Welsh was appointed Bishop of Spokane. He is the son of Jarbo and Mary Welsh of this parish. He was ordained on December 14, at 7:30 p.m., in the Spokane Coliseum.

Bishop Newell visited the parish for a week at Christmas time. He helped with the Christmas schedule of Masses and Confessions.

1979: In January, the custom of naming all parishioners who died on their particular anniversary date of death at all Sunday and daily Masses began.

The GOOD NEWS television program began in January. Fathers Hardy and Wendel present an explanation of the readings from the following Sunday's Mass. This is broadcast twice during the week, on Tuesday and Thursday for 30 minutes at 6:30 p.m.

A reception was held for Bishop Welsh on February 18, at 2:00 p.m. in the parish center.

It was decided by Father Hardy and the Parish Council to hire Mary Jo and John Gregg as pastoral assistants with a contract of \$19,000, plus housing. They began in July.

Father Hardy and the Parish Council also decided to hire a sister to assist in the pastoral care of the sick and elderly of the parish. Sister Dorothy Henscheid began her work in August.

A Seder Meal was celebrated on Wednesday, April 11, at 6:15 p.m. in the parish center.

In April, it was decided to remodel the convent during the summer. Cost was approximately \$25,000, with each parish paying half--\$12,500.

In May, the first Diocesan fundraising drive was held Programs for People. Each parishioner was asked to give 1% of their gross income to the Diocese and 5% of their gross income to the parish. Mr. Pat Burns, President of the Parish Council, was the Chairman of this drive.

Sister Digna, Sister Marie Raymond, Sister Rita Rae and Sister Ellen Mary, Dominican Sisters, took a census in June and July. They contacted 4,997 families in Rock Springs.

Renovation of the house at 636 Bridger took place during June and July.

Bishop Hart with Archbishop Jadot, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, visited Rock Springs in July to study an impacted area. Bishop Hart was on a parish visitation and celebrated the noon Mass on Sunday, July 22, at SCM.

A CCD Board was established in August with three members from each parish.

Mr. Richard Hitt, a seminarian for this Diocese, spent the three summer months here in the parish. He worked in pastoral area.

Mrs. Ray Rynio was hired as principal for this coming school year, 1979-1980.

On September 23, an open house was held at the rectory, 636 Bridger, and the convent for the parishioners to see all the renovations and changes.

A group of parishioners and Father Hardy traveled by bus to Des Moines, Iowa, from October 3-5 to see Pope John Paul II on his visit to the United States.

The Rock Springs Catholic School Home and School Association had a benefit drawing called the 300 Club. The grand prize was a four-wheel drive vehicle. Each of the 300 tickets cost \$100.

The first bi-parish "Super Sunday" Mass was held at the high school auditorium on Sunday, December 2, at 10:30 a.m. About 900 parishioners attended from the two parishes.

Bishop Newell was here during the week before Christmas to help with the Christmas schedule.

A HISTORY OF SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS CHURCH

[From "HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH" compiled by students of Journalism Classes at Rock Springs High School, instructed by H.M. Hilgenfeld, starting in 1960 and continuing through 1967:original composition by Jeanne Magagna (Storey) and Max Dolenc.]

The site of the first Roman Catholic Church in Rock Springs was No. 2 Hill. During the first four years of its existence the church remained without a pastor, but it was kept up by a few pioneer Catholics: William H. O'Donnell, Dr. Edward S. Murray, Thomas Lafferty, Dennis Murphy, Horace Levesque, Tim Kinney and Michael Quealy. Services were held in their homes before the church was built. The first Mass in Rock Springs was held in the home of W.H. O'Donnell. In 1888 a piece of property was bought with money borrowed from Tim Kinney. Finally in January, 1888, Father John Delahunty became the first priest of the first Catholic Church in Rock Springs. Father Delahunty assumed the spiritual guidance of the congregation for almost sixteen years. During this time he made many improvements and acquired considerable property. In this community of Rock Springs, Father Delahunty was respected and loved by his congregation. His labors were unceasing, and his visits were never over. Both the rich and the poor welcomed his coming and regretted his departure.

Father Delahunty was succeeded by the Rev. J. Nolan in May, 1903. Because of his frail health Father Nolan was unable to bear the burden of his duties and he was forced to resign within a year. The Rev. Joseph Dreyer, and J.F. Gurnan, a professor in All Hallows College, Salt Lake City, Utah, attended the Catholic people of Rock Springs over weekends until the Rev. Charles O'Connor was appointed in October, 1904. Like Father Nolan he was too frail to stand the long hours and the harsh winters. Succeeding Father O'Connor was Rev. August Conti, who served until May of 1907 when he left to take charge of an Italian parish

in California. From May, 1907, until July, 1910, the Rev. Thomas Barrett was pastor here. He was given the assistant. Rev. James Cerne, who attended the Slavic people of Rock Springs until Father Barrett left. In February 1910, two new pastors were sent to Rock Springs, the Rev. Frances Keller, who was to succeed Father Barrett as spiritual advisor to the English-speaking Catholics, and the Rev. Anton Schiffrer, who succeeded Father Cerne with the Slavic Catholics. With marked increase in mining activities, many people of foreign birth were coming to Rock Springs and settling on the north side near the mines. Only a small percentage of the Catholics were left on the south side of town, near the church, and the north side people and their children were left without benefit of the church as the majority refused to send their children alone to catechetical instructions on account of the constant danger of the (railroad) tracks.

Father Keller resigned within six months of his appointment because of poor health. Death took Father Keller's successor. Father Michael Kennedy, six months later. At the time of Father Kennedy's death in 1912, Father Schiffrer was made pastor of all the Roman Catholic people in Rock Springs. It was apparent to him that it was very necessary to build a church on the north side of town in order that all of the Catholic people might attend worship.

[From HISTORY OF THE DIOCESE OF CHEYENNE by the Most Reverend Patrick A. McGovern, S.T.D., LL.D. Feast of Epiphany, 1941: "During this time Father Schiffrer was constantly working on the organization of his parish and funds were being collected for the building of a new church. The location for the new church was secured, through the assistance of the bishop, from the Union Pacific Coal Company."

Father Schiffrer never did shirk from all the work which needed to be done. He left the debt-free south side church and started the north side program without resources. Father Schiffrer had little money and limited

means to obtain more when he began the work of building a north side church; nevertheless, on July 7, 1912 he saw the placing [of the cornerstone] of the house of worship he had planned. The first service was held on Christmas Eve of 1912 in the basement of the church. In 1913 there were 269 families and 2,000 souls. Father Schiffrer's work was not done though. The church was unfinished and it took thirteen years to raise funds to complete the building as it stands at the present time. These thirteen years were especially busy for the north side priest. Not until December 13, 1925 could he look up at the church of Saints Cyril and Methodius of Rock Springs and set a date for the dedication services. Father Schiffrer left Rock Springs in 1926 because of a heart weakened by long, hard work carried on in Wyoming's high altitude. That exemplary priest, Father Schiffrer, had lived in a coal bin in the rear of the basement. He had financial worries, worries of irreligious lodges and foreign language newspapers.

On the departure of Father Schiffrer of Saints Cyril and Methodius Church, the Rev. John Marley took over his position. Others who have served the north side since that time are: The Rev. John Henry—October 1926 to August, 1927; the Rev. L. Zaplotnik—September, 1927 to July, 1930; the Rev. Philip Krass—August, 1930; the Rev. Martin Kennedy—September, 1930 to June, 1931; and the Rev. Albin Gnidovec, who came on June 26, 1931 and continued to occupy the pastorate until his death in 1984. [Father Gnidovec, a native of Slovenia in old Austria, now Yugoslavia, was ordained to the Priesthood in Ljubljana on June 2, 1918. He celebrated his 25th anniversary as a Priest in 1943, and his 50th anniversary in 1968, both in his service to the Church of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Rock Springs. He was elevated to the rank of Domestic Prelate (Monsignor) by Pope Paul VI on November 7, 1964. R.L.] Father Gnidovec, as pastor, installed a new Kilgen pipe organ in 1933 which was the first and still may be the only pipe organ in the city churches. He was also responsible for the building of the Parish School and Parish Center.

In keeping with the Liturgical Renewal of Vatican Council Father Butler renovated the church—keeping with the Old Country feeling, as especially seen with the risen Christ Crucifix. Father Hardy was the first priest to bring in someone to take care of the CCD program. He brought in Sister Dorothy for the elderly. He also introduced the Parish Renewal Weekends. During his time in Rock Springs he also restored the Church after the fire.

Our pastor at the present time is Father Gerald Chleborad. During his time here so far he has hired Sister Linda as Religious Ed. coordinator. He has also brought the Renew Program to the Church.

We are a parish built by years of hard work by dedicated parishioners with the able leadership of its many pastors. We can be proud of our history and look forward to an even greater accomplishments in the years to come.

If anyone is interested in learning more about our Parish history please contact either of the Renew coordinators and we will get you the information.

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